LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

C1315 - Corridor of Puppets

Chapter 1315: Corridor of Puppets

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In the courtyard, Zhang Xuan instructed, "Sun Qiang, find out if there are any pills, spirit essence, or spirit stones that are more effective than concentrated high-tier spirit stones. I wish to buy some."

After the chat with Zhao Ya, he had returned to his residence.

As his butler, Sun Qiang had moved into the Sanctum of Sages to stay together with him. Fortunately, his residence was rather spacious, so even with the both of them staying together, it did not feel cramped at all.

“Yes!” Sun Qiang nodded before backing out of the residence.

Most of those in the Elite Division were important figures from powerful organizations, and to them, what was most important at the moment was to raise their cultivation as much as possible. As such, they were assigned personal attendants to take care of miscellaneous affairs, just like how Zhang Yu was assigned to Zhang Qian.

As Zhang Xuan’s butler, as long as he was registered with the Sanctum of Sages, he would receive an emblem that allowed him free access in and out of the Sanctum of Sages without coming under the attack of the defensive formation.

Watching at Sun Qiang’s departing back, Zhang Xuan shook his head and sighed deeply. *I really need to cultivate faster now…*

When he chatted with Zhao Ya the day before, he had found that although it had only been half a year since they last met, the latter’s cultivation had already reached Saint 7-dan!

That was many times stronger than him.

It was one thing for him to be sent flying by his future brother-in-law, but to be weaker than his students on top of that… With his current strength, how could he win Luo Ruoxin’s hand in marriage?

All along, he had thought that his talent was still okay, and the rate that he cultivated at was not too bad either… but at that moment, he had realized that he was nothing at all!

Those around him were simply too monstrous!

For this reason, as soon as he returned, he instructed Sun Qiang to find items that were rich in spiritual energy so that he could cultivate.

Currently, this was also what he was lacking the most.

After Sun Qiang left, Zhang Xuan stroked his lower jaw and thought contemplatively.

There are two ways for me to swiftly raise my fighting prowess!

Firstly, I can find Leaving Aperture realm and Grand Dominion realm cultivation technique manuals and compile the corresponding Heaven's Path Divine Arts and cultivate them swiftly.

Secondly, I can find soul cultivation technique manuals and compile the corresponding Heaven's Path Soul Art to strengthen my Primordial Spirit. Either of these two should bring about a significant growth in my strength.

Of course, if I have time, it would be best for me to find optic art manuals so as to complete the Divine Eyes of the Ninth Netherworld. If I can't cultivate the technique, I won't be able to become the head of the Sanctum of Sages!

There were two ways he could quickly raise his cultivation at the moment—zhenqi and Primordial Spirit. Currently, he had only compiled a portion of the Leaving Aperture realm Heaven's Path Divine Art, and as for Grand Dominion realm cultivation technique manuals, he had not seen a single one of them yet. He would have to make haste on that.

So, Zhang Xuan took out his identity token and took a look at it for a moment before nodding slightly.

In order gain access to the cultivation technique manuals of the Sanctum of Sages, I have to prove my fighting prowess first by clearing the Corridor of Puppets! The longer I can last in there, the more formidable the cultivation technique manual I will be able to access.

The rules of the Sanctum of Sages were vastly different from those of the Master Teacher Pavilions and Master Teacher Academies that Zhang Xuan had been to.

If anyone wanted to browse the sanctum's cultivation technique manuals or secret manuals, they would first have to prove that their fighting prowess had reached a level worthy of doing so.

The stronger their fighting prowess, the more profound the secret manuals they would be able to access. In a sense, this was aligned with Kong shi's philosophy of 'personalized guidance'.

If top-notch cultivation techniques were given to those who were incapable of cultivating them, it would only harm the person in question.

To use an analogy from Zhang Xuan's previous life, this was like giving a racing car to an amateur driver. That would not be goodwill but murder.

For this reason, the Corridor of Puppets served to evaluate the fighting prowess of those challenging it so as to determine the cultivation technique that the individual was suited for. This way, they would be able to better bring out their strength.

The Corridor of Puppets is divided into ten levels, namely Jia, Yi, Bing, Ding, Wu, Ji, Geng, Xin, Ren, and Gui [1] , and each of these levels corresponds to a couple of cultivation technique manuals. Due to the many different levels in the trial, they are able to segregate the types of cultivation techniques totally. However, what I require is quantity, not quality!

Zhang Xuan frowned in distress.

To him, it mattered not whether the cultivation technique he practiced was profound or simplistic.

This was also the reason he had not been too happy when he obtained the Divine Eyes of the Ninth Netherworld and the Heavenly Art of Dimensional Unravel, perhaps showing

disdain for them even. It was not because he was intentionally acting aloof to humblebrag but because no matter how profound a technique was, it was bound to have its flaws.

Practicing a flawed technique made him feel as if a fish bone was stuck at the back of his throat. If he had a choice, he would rather collect a thousand ordinary books and compile a Heaven's Path technique instead!

As such, the Sanctum of Sages' method of segregating the cultivation technique manuals into various tiers worked to his disadvantage.

In the past, when the manuals were placed alongside one another, he could collect all of them with just a sweep of his eyes. However, now that they were divided across different levels, compiling them together would not be that easy anymore.

After a moment of dilemma, Zhang Xuan was still unable to come up with an alternative, so he could only shake his head in defeat. *Forget it, there's no point thinking so much about it at this point. I should just head over to take a look instead.*

Pushing open the door, he left his residence.

The Corridor of Puppets could be considered as a type of trial, so it was located at the Hall of Solidarity.

Through asking those walking along the streets for directions, it did not take long for him to arrive before a gate with a massive '义 (Solidarity)' character inscribed on it. Just like the '智 (Erudition)' character that he had seen earlier, there was a deep conception behind it as well, but the sensation that it evoked was completely different.

The '智 (Erudition)' character induced sparks within one's mind, cultivating one's wisdom with a prolonged period of examination, granting one greater clarity of thought.

On the other hand, the '义 (Solidarity)' character seemed to encourage magnanimity, expanding one's narrow state of mind. All of the petty frustrations and worries that plagued one's mind in the past would vanish without a trace, and feelings of friendship and brotherhood would wrap around one's heart, lingering for a very long time.

The calligraphy looked simple on the surface, but it carried an imposing and forthright aura, reminiscent of a soldier charging valiantly across the battlefield.

"Where my solidarity lies, I shall persist even if the entire world opposes my will," Zhang Xuan muttered in a daze.

The conception behind the '义 (Solidarity)' character served to promote the unity of mankind, encouraging individuals to let go of all internal grudges and unhappiness to unite against external foes.

Without a doubt, this character had been left behind by Kong shi as well.

Otherwise, there was no way it could have placed Zhang Xuan in a daze.

Vicious' voice suddenly sounded at this moment, and vaguely, Zhang Xuan could hear him gulping. "Master. If I could just eat this calligraphy, my cultivation will definitely rise by leaps and bounds…"

"Go and play by the side!"

Ignoring that fellow who was thinking about eating every single day, Zhang Xuan began making his way into the Hall of Solidarity.

The Corridor of Puppets was located at a corner in the Hall of Solidarity. Zhang Xuan swiftly found the trial that corresponded to the Leaving Aperture realm before heading in.

The area inside was not as quiet as the Formation Master Guild branch where he had his examination previously, but there were still not many people inside.

According to the details on the jade token, it seems like multiple people can enter the Corridor of Puppets simultaneously. Most likely, they are all here to challenge the trial together, Zhang Xuan noted as he walked up to the reception.

“I would like to challenge the Corridor of Puppets for Leaving Aperture realm cultivation technique manuals. May I know how I go about doing it?”

Even though his identity token did contain some details concerning the Corridor of Puppets, the information provided was very brief.

The receptionist was a young lady in her early twenties, and she had a particularly refreshing appearance.

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan's question, she raised her head and explained with a smile, "You need to first pay one hundred concentrated high-tier spirit stones as a registration fee, and of the ten corridors here, you choose any of them to challenge. However, just a word of advice in advance, do not try to be too ambitious. The Corridor of Puppets is not easy, and arrogance may lead to you being severely wounded."

"I see." Zhang Xuan nodded.

Depending on the corridor one entered, there would be a significant difference in the strength of the puppets as well.

Zhang Xuan passed one hundred concentrated high-tier spirit stones over, and after a moment of hesitation, he said, "I choose…"

However, before he could finish his words, a voice suddenly sounded from not too far away. "I'm going to challenge the Bing Corridor [2] . I'll be counting on you, Qing Yu."

The voice had a clear ring to it—a little reminiscent of the jingling of bells—and it felt very soothing to the ears. Zhang Xuan turned his head over to look, and he saw a young lady dressed in purple standing not too far away. She seemed to be in her twenties, and there was a slightly cold and aloof air around her.

Putting aside her refined disposition, the young lady also possessed an exceptional physical appearance. In terms of beauty, she could be said to be on par with Chen Leyao.

"Senior Shui, you are here again. You really are diligent!" The eyes of the receptionist, who had been addressed as Qing Yu by the young lady, lit up, and with a chuckle, she passed a card over. "Here is your challenge token!"

"Un." Senior Shui took the card with a nod before she turned around and left.

After Senior Shui's departure, Qing Yu turned her gaze back to Zhang Xuan and asked, "Alright, which corridor do you wish to challenge?"

Zhang Xuan contemplated for a brief moment before replying.

"I… I think I'll choose the Bing Corridor as well!"

Judging from the looks of it, the Jia Corridor was the most difficult one whereas the Gui Corridor was the easiest. Even though his cultivation was only at Leaving Aperture realm primary stage at the moment, in terms of fighting prowess, he could be said to be comparable to a Grand Dominion realm primary stage expert.

However, he did not have any gauge of how difficult the Corridor of Puppets would be yet. If it was too difficult, he would not be able to clear it; if it was too easy, the cultivation technique manuals he received would be riddled with far too many flaws. Since the young lady ahead of him had chosen the Bing Corridor, it would be good for him to tag along to get a rough gauge of how powerful the puppets would be.

“You want to challenge the Bing Corridor? Are you sure?” Qing Yu frowned in astonishment.

“Yes, I’m certain.” Zhang Xuan nodded. “Why? Is there a problem with me challenging the Bing Corridor?”

“That isn’t what I mean.” The young lady shook her head before continuing. “Senior Shui is a genius who entered the Elite Division several years ago, and her cultivation has already long reached Leaving Aperture realm pinnacle. Even so, despite devoting an

entire month to challenging the Bing Corridor, she still hasn't cleared it. Given so, are you really certain that… you want to challenge the Bing Corridor? If I'm not mistaken, your cultivation should only be at Leaving Aperture realm primary stage, right?"

"A Leaving Aperture realm pinnacle cultivator has challenged it for a month now but has still yet to succeed?" Zhang Xuan was shocked.

He thought that he would not have much trouble clearing the Corridor of Puppets, but after hearing what Qing Yu had said, he realized that he might have been underestimating the trial.

"Indeed. The Jia Corridor is the hardest corridor to clear in the Corridor of Puppets, and in the several dozen millenniums since the Sanctum of Sages was established, there has only been a small handful of people who have managed to clear it. There were slightly more people who had cleared the Yi Corridor, but even if one adds all of them up, the number definitely won't exceed a hundred.

"Considering how difficult the first two corridors are, it should not be too difficult for you to image the difficulty of the Bing Corridor too. In some years, there are cases where not even a single student manages to clear the Bing Corridor. In fact, the last person who cleared the Bing Corridor was the little princess of the Luo Clan. As such, I really don't recommend challenging it!" Qing Yu shook her head.

The difficulty of the Jia, Yi, and Bing Corridors had already reached a horrifying level. Putting aside a Leaving Aperture realm primary stage cultivator, even a pinnacle cultivator would find it hard to clear the challenge. For him to challenge it when it was his first time there…

Truly, the ignorant know no fear!

Zhang Xuan was startled for a moment before his eyes lit up in agitation. "You said that the little princess of the Luo Clan has challenged the Bing Corridor previously?"

"That's right!" Oblivious to the changes in Zhang Xuan's emotions, Qing Yu continued with her earnest persuasion. "My view is that, given your current strength, it would be best for you to challenge the Gui Corridor [3] first. It's the easiest one to clear. Even though you are only at Leaving Aperture realm primary stage, as long as you possess a decent

knowledge of combat, you stand a good chance of clearing the trial. As for the Bing Corridor, it would be best if you dropped that notion from your mind!”

Shaking his head, Zhang Xuan said, “Thank you for your goodwill. However, I still wish to give the Bing Corridor a try. If it doesn’t work out, I’ll return here and give the other corridors a try.”

Since Ruoxin had cleared the Bing Corridor, he was determined to do the same as well.

“You’ll return here to give the other corridors a try?” Seeing that the other party was unwilling to listen to her advice, Qing Yu frowned. “Once the mechanism whirs into action and the puppets move, if you don’t have sufficient strength to stand your ground, you could end up suffering immense damage.”

Knowing that the other party was trying to persuade him out of goodwill, Zhang Xuan replied with a smile, “I understand, but I still wish to give it a try.”

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